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Title: International Tea- Day.

SHRIMATI MINATI SEN (JALPAIGURI): Madam Chairman, today, tea producing countries across the world are going to observe the International Tea Day to draw the attention of the Government and the citizens on the impact of tea trade workers, small tea growers, consumers and industry.

The pathetic condition of tea industry in India perhaps needs no elaboration. A number of tea gardens have either been closed perpetually or have been abandoned by the owners. As a result, the production of tea has gone down drastically in the last few years, and thousands and thousands of workers have become jobless.

It is needless to say that women of this sector are the worst sufferers because they constitute more than 50 per cent of the total workforce.

Madam, through you, I demand a Master Plan from the Government of India so that the tea industry can get a boost; closed and abandoned tea gardens are opened; and through aggressive marketing India tea can find its place in the international market.

I also demand tea should be sold hundred per cent through tea auction centre. I would like to request the hon. Minister, through you, Madam, to take appropriate action so that newly set up tea auction centres could run and operate smoothly.